

Paulette Turner-Byrd

From: Karen Durfey <durfkey@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 1, 2019 8:36 AM
To: Commissioners
Subject: Crisis Center and Hub

Gentlemen:

It concerns us that possible moves of the Hub and Crisis Center are under consideration. These centers are supporting the intended purposes for their creation in their current locations. I am highly opposed to a single religious organization assuming control when a community of churches in downtown Billings has already given assistance to those shunned by the Rescue Mission after the Hub and Crisis Center are full. My Back Yard is successful; the Hub and Crisis Center are successful where they are. Don't "fix" something that isn't broken.

Sincerely,

Karen and Curt Durfey

134 Erickson Ct. N.

Billings, MT 59105

Paulette Turner-Byrd

From: Amy Aguirre <aguirreamyd@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 1, 2019 8:53 PM
To: Commissioners
Subject: The Hub and the Crisis Center

I think it is an atrocity to even consider allowing Matt Lundgren to oversee services offered by the Hub and the Crisis Center. Mr. Lundgren and his religious views do not represent the whole of this community. I am a devout Catholic who attends church on the southside and has done so since my birth 43 years ago. I also work at a women's drop in center in Billings, offering services to the marginalized women and families of this community. While my organization is founded by two Catholic sisters, we do not evangelize to those we serve because we understand that not every individual shares the same faith viewpoint as we do, and can therefore not effectively serve those who come through our doors, were we to push our religion upon them. I believe that this same approach needs to be applied to other services offered to our community, especially to the marginalized and overlooked members. Giving Mr. Lundgren so much power by having authority over the Hub and the Crisis Center would significantly narrow their ability to serve those who need it the most, because while at some point in their lives they may seek to find Jesus or search for a higher power, when they are in CRISIS, their basic needs first need to be met. Any individual with training on how to serve the marginalized will tell you that. I have not understood or experienced Mr. Lundgren's services to be extended beyond the religious viewpoint in trying to effectively serve the needy. Rather, his religious viewpoints are fully incorporated into his services, thereby ostracizing very many people who desperately need those services.

I urge you to allow these services provided by the Hub and the Crisis Center to remain intact as they are today, and to not allow Mr. Lundgren and his overreaching religious viewpoints to taint the critical work these organizations are doing. It would not be serving the greater good, rather it would only be serving the religious righteous.

Amy Aguirre
1504 Lewis Ave
Billings, MT 59103
(406)690-0332

Sent from my iPhone

Paulette Turner-Byrd

From: Paula Schilke <paula46@bresnan.net>
Sent: Monday, July 1, 2019 9:30 AM
To: Commissioners
Cc: Marguerite Jodry; Catherine Card; Margaret MacDonald; Robyn Driscoll; Genna Carlisle; mew
Subject: Plans to move HUB and Crisis Center

Dear Sirs,

As a property owner and member of the South Side Task Force, I have been concerned for quite some time about certain individuals and organizations using the triangle area to support their political and financial agendas. Of course, I love this area and want to see it thrive, and there are individuals and organizations that are doing just that, i.e., Healthy by Design. These organizations do not immediately involve city and county governments to come in from the outside and ask for support and money to implement their plans, but work within our community to make this happen. Have you seen our new mural on the pool house in South Park? What about the new signs that designate our area as the Bright Side of the Tracks?

We are constantly dealing with litter from the homeless. Will this increase? If so, are Matt and his organization willing to take over the task of keeping our area litter and graffiti free, or is this something that they expect the individual homeowners or Task Force to take care of?

What about this organization that Matt has chosen to involve in the Friendship House and MRM activities? Does it have a good reputation? How much research has been done? The gentleman who came with Matt to our task force meeting was introduced as his friend. We finally found out what his name was and when some research was done found out that he was from Idaho and part of this organization that Matt is connected with.

Sincerely,

Paula Schilke

Sent from my iPad

Paulette Turner-Byrd

From: Archer/Tully <archtul@bresnan.net>
Sent: Tuesday, July 2, 2019 8:44 AM
To: Commissioners
Subject: RE: Community Crisis Center and the Hub

Commissioners:

It is important first of all to maintain the current level of funding by the County for the Community Crisis Center (CCC) and the HUB. These organizations provide services not provided by anyone else in Billings. Their staffs are trained in managing a variety of difficult cases, but more importantly, CCC turns no one away for any reason.

My concern is that the idea floated recently by some of the Commissioners to house CCC and the HUB under the auspices of the Montana Rescue Mission may jeopardize the autonomy that both the CCC and the HUB currently enjoy in their decision-making, and may subject clients to arbitrary screening.

Furthermore, while CCC's facility is constrained by space, it's location near the Medical Corridor is ideal. And while the HUB's location may not be ideal, it is readily accessible, and the building is owned by the Mental Health Center.

I also think it is important that both of these organizations remain secular in nature and not subject to the religious views of any organization or individual. Part of the reason CCC has been successful is because it turns away no one, whether because of inebriation or sexual preference or identity; in other words, some of the people who are most at risk. These services need to be non-discriminatory and able to provide a safe space for everyone. At the same time it's important to note that churches and religious organizations can play a role in supporting these organizations.

This is a shared problem; it requires a shared solution.

Sincerely,
Barbara Archer and Tom Tully
2210 Pryor Ln
archtul@bresnan.net

Paulette Turner-Byrd

From: Carol Henckel <carol2b4@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 2, 2019 10:47 AM
To: Commissioners
Subject: On the Hub issue

July 2nd, 2019

Dear Yellowstone County Commissioners Denis Pitan, Don Jones, John Ostland,

I read with interest the Billings Gazette Guest Opinion from Margie MacDonald and Robyn Driscoll titled "Speak up now for Hub, Crisis Center". I found the article very enlightening and in some ways reinforcing some things I observed and am aware of. I live in Stillwater County but have had several encounters with the Hub and am often in the area downtown near the Hub. Let me explain. Due to the sudden death of a friend's teenage son I became a part of a several year project to honor the actions of this young man. He went to school at Central and did a paper for school on the homeless. That contact lead him to continue to help the Hub as a volunteer until his death. After his death there was an effort to do a couple events to donate to those who used the Hub. That came with my coming to the Hub to help organize things for the event where I observed the people coming and going. I have a nursing background so I was interested in that part and saw medical needs front and center. I saw mental health as a primary part of the hub's daily work. I was so impressed with the staff who faced volatility, desperation and inability with efforts to move issues quickly through the system. The acceptance of those who do not reflect the "best" or "the acceptable look or behavior" society expects was so remarkable. Their caring as I observed just never stopped. People came in to just to be acknowledged as a viable human being with a hello by name or a pat on the back. I observed them call over and over to get someone into the system for pharmacy needs, obvious medical needs for injuries and care at hospitals. The use of drugs or alcohol was acknowledged but the person's need was still focused on despite their flaws. One of the things that I learned and was shocked by was the inability to get a medication filled after the person left the hospital after a psychiatric crisis. They were given meds while there that gave them some control over their lives. When they left they were forced to wait days for the social system to get there medications filled. That meant they could again fall back into the crisis they just left because they had no money to fill the prescription until the state paid. It is a loophole that I help with through a donation so they can be given some meds while they wait through the Hub.

As an observer downtown I see many homeless in wheelchairs, on crutches or in obvious psychiatric crisis. I have observed and heard those around a party help steer their new to town fellow homeless with a need to the Hub. It is a very integral part of the area and as these parties in the opinion wrote a nearby close link to the medical corridor. Years ago I worked at St. Vincents Hospital when there was no "Hub" to help them transition in a strange town. We saw numerous people in needs at a hospital where they could not help. I watched volatile situations escalate because of the futility these people felt of not being heard and a lack of where to send them. To move the Hub I feel is not a solution that I see viable. There is a very definite need for the Hub to meet a very different need in the homeless community. The Rescue Mission is a wonderful program and the "My backyard program" will meet very different needs. Some of the homeless the Hub touches are those new to the system, or not willing to alter their destructive personal behavior or fearful to use help that is right there. The Hub grooms those people to learn to find understanding, learn acceptance is there and to maybe try the system they are so fearful to trust.

I hope this helps you see an outsider's view after some visits to the Hub.

Carol Henckel 406-633-2598

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Thanks!

Carol Henckel
carol@bigskyoutdoors.net

406.633.2598 home

Paulette Turner-Byrd

From: chair@yellowstonegop.org
Sent: Tuesday, July 2, 2019 9:17 AM
To: Commissioners
Cc: Donald Jones; Denis Pitman; John Ostlund
Subject: HUB/Crisis Center

Good morning Commissioners

The recent opinion by Mrs MacDonald and Driscoll was concerning cause they offered one side of the story.

Our community benefits from a fresh perspective on tough topics from time to time. The Hub and the Crisis Center models are experiencing that now. Is there a better solution to geographically disconnected services for mental health? Billings has an exceptional service corridor with two hospitals toward the north (including Billings Clinic Crisis Center and Psychiatric services), and Riverstone Health, Montana Rescue Mission, St. Vincent dePaul, CLDI and Family Services toward the south. The Hub and Crisis Centers are located somewhere between these anchors. They certainly aren't within walking distance from one another or any other of the much needed social service agencies. The commissioners are offering fresh eyes on the situation. The Crisis Center has \$1.5 million in reserve looking for a new location. The Hub facility is located near a busy intersection. But rather than look at the physical systems, let's look at logistical reasons to locate these business in closer proximity. Relocating the Crisis Center and the Hub near the MRM makes sense from the standpoint of customer care. Relocation would also put clients nearer other social service agencies and public health. Let's develop an integrated, cooperative and streamlined system of assisting those in need of these social services rather than offer duplicated services between agencies.

Regards,

Tim A Stark
Chairman
Yellowstone County Republicans
www.yellowstonegop.org